

Wisconsin Commercial Buildings Construction Classifications: Wisconsin Code Before July 1, 2002 Compared to Current Code

| <i>Old Wisconsin Commercial Building Code</i> | <i>International Building Code</i> |
|--|---|
| Type 1: Fire Resistive – Type A | Type IA |
| Type 2: Fire Resistive – Type B | Type IB |
| Type 3: Metal Frame - Protected | Type IIA |
| Type 4: Heavy Timber | Type IV |
| Type 5A: Exterior Masonry – Protected | Type IIIA |
| Type 5B: Exterior Masonry – Unprotected | Type IIIB |
| Type 6: Metal Frame – Unprotected | Type IIB |
| Type 7: Wood Frame – Protected | Type VA |
| Type 8: Wood Frame - Unprotected | Type VB |

The chart shows a generalized conversion from the Wisconsin Administrative Building Code construction classification types before the July 1, 2022 code revisions which adopted 2000 International Building Code types. Compliance with the past Wisconsin class of construction does not necessarily mean compliance with its pair in the above table for a new Wisconsin/IBC class of construction. **Each situation needs to be separately analyzed for compliance.**

the construction classifications in Wisconsin changed in 1974 from the old classifications of fire-resistive, mill, ordinary, and frame to the ones shown at left in the above table. And, as in previous codes, the present code is also not retroactive. If the building met the code at the time it was constructed, or at the time it was changed into its present use, it is still compliant for the life of that building in that use.

Alterations and additions to those buildings under a previous code must be carefully undertaken to permit the untouched areas to remain in compliance with the code at the time they were constructed, while meeting all of the present code requirements for those areas altered or affected by the addition. In some cases, a fire division wall per IBC section 705 may be necessary to separate an addition from the original building.

The 2000 IBC chapter 6 does have some differences in materials not permitted in certain classifications and certain allowances for materials in other classifications. There is in IBC 603 an extensive list of exceptions to allow some combustible materials in noncombustible Types I and II constructions, and also a much longer description of acceptable Type IV heavy timber materials and construction methods.

Building designers and code officials should refer to IBC section 602 and Table 601 for the minimum construction requirements needed to determine the classification of construction of a building.

A couple significant points include:

- IBC Type IIB, unprotected steel construction, does **not** generally permit the substitution of 1-hour combustible construction, other than as permitted by section IBC 603.1.

- IBC Types IIIA & IIIB do not require six inches of exterior masonry, however those types do require rated NC (noncombustible) or FRTW (fire-retardant-treated wood) framed exterior walls.
- Although heavy timber construction is numbered IBC Type IV, similar as under the previous Wisconsin code, there are major differences of noncombustible exterior walls and no concealed structural spaces are permitted (one exception).
- Most typical pole buildings are likely to be IBC Type VB. However, a pole building with fire-retardant treated girts and noncombustible siding, where it is located at least 30 feet from property lines may meet IBC Type IIIB classification. (Walls are typically considered designed non-bearing in pole buildings.)